

## **Protecting Our Commerce**

### **Enhancing Port and Waterway Security**

**Economic development is a long-term process that requires a vision and hard work. In order to make progress, we have to continue to work together and plan for the future of our children and those to come.**

**The Vicksburg-Warren County area economy is very diversified, with growth in manufacturing, tourism, regional retail sales, casino gaming, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Lower Mississippi Division Headquarters, U. S. Waterways Experiment Station, Mississippi River Commission Headquarters, new regional medical facilities, and all four modes of transportation.**

**There are many potential projects that will provide infrastructure and emphasis for our area to**

**prosper and provide a great quality of life for our citizens. One of those is the Port of Vicksburg.**

**Operated by the Warren County Port Commission, the Port of Vicksburg began shipping operations in October 1968. Each year, more than three million tons of cargo passes through the port, which has its own U.S. Customs Port of Entry.**

**The port consists of a slack water channel 9,500 feet in length and 300 feet wide with 12 feet minimum depth. Vicksburg Harbor is connected to the Mississippi River by a 4,800-foot long channel maintained at 150 feet wide and 12 feet deep.**

**Based on its efficiency in loading and unloading cargoes, the Port of Vicksburg was selected as one of the best inland ports in the nation by the Ports and Waterways Institute at Louisiana State University.**

**Facilities at the Port include a 15-ton bridge crane and a T-dock equipped with a 125-ton crane. Rail-served warehousing facilities are also available.**

**One of the most outstanding features of the Port is the LASH program. This program enables a barge to be sealed for international travel in Vicksburg and transferred directly to New Orleans, where the barge is then loaded, with products still sealed. Ten barge lines service the Port of Vicksburg year-round without seasonal limitations.**

**The Port is accessible from U.S. Highway 61, which interchanges with Interstate 20, six miles away. The site is within a commercial trucking zone and is served by 21 truck lines.**

**A feasibility study through a contract with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers from the Mississippi Department of Transportation will determine the need**

**and economic impact on a region encompassing a 100-mile radius around Vicksburg-Warren County, Mississippi.**

**Recently, another U. S. Department of Transportation study revealed highway and rail transportation has increased to the point that alternate modes of transportation, such as water transportation, will have to be utilized more in the future. Another fact that was pointed out is water transportation is the least costly of the three modes of transportation.**

**Presently, there are 322 acres of industrial land at the Port of Vicksburg and another 25 acres along the Yazoo Diversion Channel that have access to water transportation on the Mississippi River and its tributaries.**

**There are 24 companies employing 2,413 people direct and indirectly who use water transportation at the Port of Vicksburg. These figures do not include the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers or two other companies that are at the Port and use rail and truck.**

**The 24 companies, situated on 322 acres, employing 2,413 people, transport approximately 3,750,000 tons per year through the Port of Vicksburg, and employ 2,413 people with an annual payroll of \$113,615,320.**

**Utilizing existing data on employee payrolls, tons, both direct and indirect on existing port property, the following economic impact can be projected.**

- a. The 322 acres of land occupied by companies utilizing water transportation average 10 employees per acre.**

**b. The payroll is \$113,615,320 for direct and indirect employees or approximately \$511,780 in payroll per acre.**

**c. The average tonnage generated is 3,750,000 tons or 11,646 tons per acre.**

**The economic impact of 80 acres of new industrial land fully utilizing water transportation would be:**

**a. An additional 872 employees at an annual payroll of \$40,942,400 and an increase of 931,680 tons per year.**

**The U. S. Chamber of Commerce projects a payroll turns over seven times within a community. Therefore, an annual payroll of \$40,942,400 would generate an economic impact of \$286,596,800 in the 100-mile radius of Vicksburg-Warren County, of**

**which 60% remain in the Vicksburg-Warren County area.**

**This same impact could be felt adversely if the Port of Vicksburg's security came under attack or that of one of its companies. The state and national economy would have an even greater impact if the Mississippi River Bridge, the only rail crossing between Memphis, Tennessee and Baton Rouge, Louisiana, were to become a target.**

**The Bush Administration has developed a comprehensive National Strategy for Homeland Security, focused on several key areas: intelligence and warning; border and transportation security; protecting critical infrastructure; defending against catastrophic threats; and emergency preparedness and response.**

**We must prepare an approach to security that incorporates prevention and protection in a way that respects our liberty and our privacy, and fosters our prosperity. We cannot afford to be overwhelmed by fear or paralyzed by the existence of threats, but be prepared and aware.**

**Risk management is fundamental to managing the threat, while retaining our quality of life and living in freedom. Risk management must guide our decision-making as we examine how we can best organize to prevent, respond and recover from an attack.**

**These words were taken from a speech delivered by our Homeland Security Secretary, Michael Chertoff.**

**How quickly your company can get back to business after a terrorist attack or tornado, a fire or flood often depends on emergency planning - done**



**today. A commitment to planning today will help support employees, customers, the community, the local economy and even the country. It also protects your business investment and gives your company a better chance for survival.**

**Business continuity and crisis management can be complex issues depending on your particular industry, size and scope of your business. However, putting a plan in motion will improve the likelihood that your company will survive and recover!**

**America's Waterway Watch is a national awareness program that asks those who work, live, or recreate on or near the water to be aware of suspicious activity that might indicate threats to our country's homeland security. American's are urged to adopt a heightened sensitivity toward unusual events or**

**individuals they may encounter in or around ports, docks, marinas, riversides, beaches, or communities.**

**Since the events of terrorism on September 11<sup>th</sup>, and as part of the National Homeland Security effort, our community is fortunate to have very pro-active local leaders, from the city and county, working together to address and implement-mandated procedures to protect Vicksburg and Warren County.**

**As a port city, there are standardized incident management processes, protocols and procedures that have been put into place. Working together with the United States Coast Guard and their safety unit, a Harbor Safety and Security Committee has been established. Daily awareness intelligence and anti-terrorism reports are received and acted upon as necessary. Working with together with the Warren County Sheriff's Department patrol boats are**

**launched as needed to monitor our bridges and harbor through the Warren County Sheriff's Department. There is a 24-hour security presence at the Mississippi River Bridge and the Highway 80 Bridge. Local and county law enforcement, city and county fire department leaders, the U. S. Coast Guard, the Mississippi State Highway Patrol office, and our local Emergency Management Agency communicate frequently on emergency procedures needed to activate and protect our community. Business leaders from all industry at the Port of Vicksburg have come together to share essential information and contact numbers necessary to response quickly and efficiently to ensure our industry are aware and prepared for any emergency to protect our port and community.**

**In addition, our Warren County Emergency Director, Mr. L. W. "Bump" Callaway is actively pursuing a Buffer Zone Protection Grant through the**

**Mississippi Office of Homeland Security and the U. S. Marshal Service is conducting a survey to ensure the protection of our Warren County Court House.**

**The people of Warren County can take great pride in knowing our community leaders and law enforcement are committed to insure our citizens the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> were not taken lightly and security is in place to help keep our environment and economy free from threat.**